March 1996

Weed Jungle Gives Way to Pretty Park

by Brent Bernau - *Neighborhood Improvement Committee*

Two years ago, 10-foot tall fennel towered over passersby. Cast off cans and broken bottles served as mulch. A homeless person regularly nested in the tangled undergrowth.

Today, a neatly landscaped space provides a small oasis amidst the asphalt and cement of our urban neighborhood. A cheery morning greeting at the entry to the village to those on the way down the hill at the beginning of their day, hurrying to BART or MUNI. A bright spot for workers as they begin their trudge up the hill after their day's work.

The small triangle of land bordering the city sewer right of way by itself is too small to build a house. Unwanted, unusable, almost worthless, it suffered from neglect, its owner having long ago moved from the City. The right of way is to provide access for the sewer line--not necessarily to create a pleasant public space. It goes from the curve on Diamond, following property lines to where it exits on Chenery (between the laundromat and Creighton's). Just before it hits Chenery it crosses an apartment building's property, so the gate on that end is closed and overgrown with ivy.

But that little scruff of nothing between 2783 and 2785 Diamond Street (near Chenery) eventually brought people in the neighborhood together as those concerned about it decided to pitch in and make a difference. A dozen or so got together on weekends to hack down the fennel, digging out those tenacious roots, of course, clear the garbage and prepare the patch of dirt for better things to come. They shared a sense of purpose and a positive feeling of community grew.

The effort caught the attention of local landscaper Steve Skinner, who became as a man on a mission. He organized the volunteers, directed the tasks and kept the movement going. He brought plants that his clients no longer wanted, giving them a second chance to thrive, as well as extras from his business and donations of still others that would fit especially well.

The city cooperated very well, dutifully delivering loads of mulch whenever asked. Some of the volunteers and other neighborhood residents also donated plants. Database searches were done to determine the owners of Surrey Street rental properties with backyards abutting the right of way.

Eight of the yards bordering the now cleared right of way were cleared of fennel, spurge and other weeds. Some of the owners were only too happy to participate; others required a bit of prodding; a couple wouldn't do it, but didn't object to the crew of neighborhood volunteers doing it for them. Only one declined permission to have the property cleaned up. Clearing the weeds off those abutting properties was most welcome, for otherwise, unchecked weed growth on those properties would've doomed the neighborhood effort with new seeds fueling an unending battle for control of the park.

Most of the property owners built new fences, further enhancing the budding park's appearance. And not one complained about the removal of the weeds impinging on their privacy: all apparently welcomed the improvements.

(continued on page 3)

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Glen Park News

Glen Park News is published quarterly by the Glen Park Association in March, June, September and December. Signed articles are the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the Glen Park Association.

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Glen Park Association Notes

DUES INCREASE

At the general meeting on January 9, 1996, a vote was passed to increase the annual association dues from $5 to $10/member.

NEW GPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers for the 1996-1997 year were elected at our February annual meeting. Congratulations to all the new officers and thanks to all the continuing and past officers. Great job!

President - John Dahlen
Past President - Linda Montgomery

Vice-President - Zoanne Nordstrom
Past Vice-President - Jeff Tanenbaum

Treasurer - Ellis Gans
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(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

As the heavy work of clearing and planting neared its completion, maintenance of the park necessarily fell to a few. Steve's tireless efforts kept a small core group going long after the enthusiasm and excitement of the project's beginning wore thin. A special thanks to Pat Crowe and Mark Zinky for their extra effort.

Now, months later, the fennel is beaten and only periodic weeding and watering is necessary. A resident of Surrey Street whose backyard borders the park allows his water to be used during the dry summer months.

The efforts of those working in the park regularly receive welcome reinforcement from other neighbors who pass by and comment on the positive effect the cleanup has had. Others signify their approval simply with a smile and a nod.

The park has stayed remarkably free of litter and no one has stolen or intentionally damaged the plants. It's encouraging to those who care that our neighbors and young people apparently respect the subtle beauty of this small plot of land. Neighbors are encouraged to enjoy the park but to be careful where they walk and where they allow their dogs to relieve themselves. Several plants have been damaged and some killed by apparent carelessness.

Anyone interested in helping with the weeding (it amounts to a couple hours once every couple of months) and ongoing tending is encouraged to call Brent Bernau at 337-1529.

LIBRARY NEWS

Films and Storytime for Preschoolers, every Tuesday at 10:00 am to 10:45 am.

Regular library hours:

Tuesday	10 AM - 6 PM
Wednesday	12 PM - 8 PM
Thursday	1 PM - 7 PM
Friday	1 PM - 6 PM
Saturday	1 PM - 6 PM

For more information, call 337-4740.

Calendar

MARCH

2nd - **Eileen Blodget Art Exhibit**
Café ?, 2885 Diamond St., till April 10th.

12th - **Glen Park Association Meeting**

16th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Native Plant Restoration***

20th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Meeting**
7:30 pm at the Recreation Center

23rd - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Spring Flower Walk**
9 AM. Leader Jake Sigg. Contact Jean Conner, 584-8576, to reserve space.

APRIL

9th - **Glen Park Association Meeting**

10th - **Glen Park After School Program's "Through My Looking Glass" Art Exhibit Reception**
7 - 8:30 PM at Café ?,
Exhibit till April 30th.
See Page 5 for more info.

17th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Meeting,**
7:30 pm at the Recreation Center

20th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Native Plant Restoration***

MAY

14th - **Glen Park Association Meeting**

15th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Meeting,**
7:30 pm at the Recreation Center.

18th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Native Plant Restoration***

Emily Bratt, Watercolors Art Exhibit
Café ?, Call for date and time.

JUNE

11th - **Glen Park Association Meeting**

15th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Native Plant Restoration***

19th - **Friends of Glen Canyon Park Meeting,**
7:30 pm at the Recreation Center

* Friends of Glen Canyon Park work parties are held the 3rd Saturday of the month, from 9:00 am to 12:00 PM. Wear work clothes and gloves. Meet behind the Rec Center where the stream goes underground. Heavy rain cancels. Contact Jean Conner at 584-8576.

KIDS GET CREATIVE - DON'T MISS IT!

The 7th annual exhibit of work from the award-winning ***Glen Park Creative Arts After School Program*** features work by children from kindergarten to fifth grade. Paintings and other works to be exhibited at "Café ?" are symbolic self-portraits and surreal images inspired by nature. These works are executed in a variety of mediums, including oil pastel, acrylics and caran d'ache crayons. Some 20 - 30 children will be represented in the show, and some pieces are for sale.

The event is a fund-raiser for the 15 year old Glen Park Creative Arts After School Program. In an era of diminished public funding for arts and schooling, who will introduce children to the world of art? The Glen Park Creative Arts After School Program is a non-profit source of instruction to children. The program operates on the belief that art gives children a sense of personal worth that supports their social and intellectual development.

Because art reflects the artist's world, we discuss current issues and the work of great artists, and build programs around themes that explore the diversity of our environment.

"Through My Looking Glass" Art Exhibit opens Wednesday, April 10 at Café ?. A reception will be held from 7 - 8:30 PM. For more information, call Tessa Loehwing, Director (415) 469-7928.

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with Jean Conner

March is the month when our Spring flowers begin to appear. It is a time when a walk in the Canyon is full of discoveries. However, some of the discoveries are not what you want to find; trees being cut down and ground being stripped of all vegetation.

Let's look at the eucalyptus. it is a tree introduced from Australia. Here in Glen Canyon it has none of the insects or diseases which would restrict its growth in its native country. Thus it invades the habitat of our native trees and plants. Notice the lack of undergrowth in the eucalyptus groves in the Canyon. The eucalyptus produces a chemical which restricts the growth of plants around it. Also, the nuts and heavy leaf litter from the trees blocks out the light and the water necessary for the growth of seedlings. The eucalyptus uses a lot of water. This is not a problem during our wet season but in the dry Summer months it helps to reduce the creek to a mere trickle. The roots of the eucalyptus trees growing on the rock formations split the rocks and destroy one of the beauties of our Canyon. Then there is the problem of safety. During our Winter storms there is a real danger from falling limbs and trees.

On the other hand, the eucalyptus is a beautiful tree. It is the nesting and roosting place for red-tailed hawks and great horned owls. Its flowers are a good nectar source for hummingbirds. Care must be taken in how many trees are removed and from what areas.

What about the removal of all those willow? Yes, the willows are native but they too take a lot of water from the creek and also shade out the small ground-covering plants. Historically, the willows were held in check by grazing animals such as deer and cattle in the Canyon. Now without any grazers the willow has been spreading, crowding out other native flora and forcing the trails up onto the steep hillsides away from the flat areas along the creek.

Also cleared away were the non-native plants, English ivy and Himalayan blackberry, which have spread along the creek banks creating areas lacking plant diversity. This rainy season Friends of Glen Canyon Park and the Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society have been replanting these areas with native plants. The majority of the plants were grown from seed collected from Glen Canyon Park by the San Francisco Conservation Corps for this purpose. Please protect these new plants when you walk in the Canyon. Step carefully, keep to the trails and watch out for these young plants.

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SAN FRANCISCO NATURAL HISTORY SERIES

Monthly Thursday evening talks, free to the public, are held at The Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way (off Roosevelt Way), on Corona Heights in San Francisco.

Come at 7:20 PM for socializing and viewing displays; presentations begin promptly at 7:30. A small donation to cover expenses (printing and mailing) is requested but not required.

March 28

San Francisco Mushrooms, Then and Now, with Chester Laskowski, President of the Mycological Society of San Francisco - a presentation and slides comparing fungi that were here in 18th what is left today.

April 25

Snowy Plovers, the Endangered Species of Ocean Beach, with Daphne Hatch of the National Park Service. Learn about the Plover and what is being done to develop and implement a Recovery Plan to bring the plover back from endangered status.

May 23

Hummingbirds. Learn about the smallest members of the avian world. Maryl Sundove, naturalist and education coordinator for the Richardson Bay Audubon Center, will present a slide program on what makes hummers so special, telling stories of their biology and life histories. Meryl will also give clues on how to attract our local hummingbirds.

SILVER TREE SCHOLARSHIPS

Funds from the Glen Park/Diamond Heights NIT-AMP program have been designated for scholarships for Silver Tree Camp this summer.

Contact Miriam Moss at 585-1635 for additional information.

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Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

What are your main areas of interest/concern about Glen Park? _____

_____

On what committee would you like to become involved? _____

Thank you for your support!